

Unequal Urban Worlds

RC21 Call for Sessions

World Congress of Sociology
Yokohama, Japan, 13-19 July 2014

In the spirit of the main theme of the World Congress of Sociology, '*Facing an unequal world: challenges for global sociology*', RC21 sessions will be organized around the issues of inequality and social justice.

Inequality and social justice have been topics tackled at length in urban studies in general and urban sociology in particular. In the early 20th Century, Chicago sociologists took cities as social laboratories in which the mechanisms that create and reproduce social inequalities were addressed and innovative solutions were found. In the late 1960s, the founders of RC21 (and the International Journal of Urban and Regional Research) examined cities in the wider context of capitalist development and found structural relations between capital accumulation, state policy, and deep-seated poverty and inequality.

Today, we are facing a world characterized by instability and uncertainty. The adoption of market principles has constituted a dominant social force in cities across the developed North or the developing South. Social polarization has been aggravated by a combination of industrial restructuring, ethnic conflict, natural/social disasters, rapid urban population growth, and the malfunctioning of models of social organization centered on the value of collective goods and public services.

This has resulted in the reconfiguration and imbalance of power at different levels, including the consolidation of financial/speculative capital on a global scale, the relativization of state power, and the emergence of new forms of civic organizations at both local and global levels.

Bearing in mind these general social trends, the main concern of the RC21's sessions is to seek better understanding of the mechanisms at work and their interplay with the spatial dimension.

Taking the spatial dimension into consideration brings us new insights. First, it allows us to identify how the tension between social justice and inequalities deploys at different territorial levels, between cities or regions and within them. Different social groups have different life chances, they are distributed differently in space and they are also reproduced through mechanisms associated with spatial processes (such as segregation and gentrification). Secondly, it allows us to identify the forms through which these differences might give rise to specific social struggles which express demands for more fairness in decision-making and resource allocation processes at different scales. Third, it allows us to analyze critically the transformation – in particular the rescaling process – of contemporary forms of governance and policy interventions which seek to influence two fundamental aspects of social justice: the distribution of material resources, and the existence of forms of domination and oppression. Space plays a major role in the analytical models we use to understand these three dimensions.

The analysis of the relations between inequality, social justice and spatial processes of change should be the overall focus of the sessions proposed to RC21 and should cut across classical themes, like:

- a) Capital forms and their spatial expression (the economic geography of capital, in its different forms,...)
- b) Expressing inequalities, changing the urban form (gentrification, segregation, ...)
- c) Rights, duties and participation (local welfare, citizenship, participatory practices, ...)
- d) Urbanity and everyday practices of in/exclusion (public space, policing, urban culture,...)
- e) Inter-urban inequalities (globalization, national development, urban-rural issues, ...)
- f) Resilient cities (urban social movements, informal economy, survival strategies, ...)

- g) Cities in context of government and governance (urban policy and politics, rescaling, ...)

Sessions should consider the current context of global change in both the world economy and the emerging geopolitical configurations and their consequences at the urban and regional level.

Priority will be given to proposals fostering comparisons and methodological innovation, centered on the comprehension of the mechanisms that generate social (in)justice and/or (in)equalities at the regional and local level and their scalar relations, and on the responses (both social mobilizations and policy interventions) to these.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF SESSION CHAIRS

- a) Session chairs are responsible for one or more time slots. The total number of sessions will depend on the number of abstracts submitted.
- b) Session chairs participate in the selection process of abstracts submitted for presentation within their session and in allocating papers to different sessions as appropriate. Session chairs will rank all abstracts submitted for the respective session. Final decisions on the number of time slots per session and the acceptance of papers will be made by Programme coordinators considering the ranking of chairs.
- c) Session chairs together with programme coordinators supervise the deadlines for full paper submission.

IMPORTANT

- a) All sessions have to be organised as open streams and sessions. No session shall be limited to members of an existing project network.
- b) Session chairs themselves shall not submit abstracts to their session.

- c) Only one abstract submission per participant is allowed. Exceptions are foreseen for co-authored papers.

WHAT A SESSION PROPOSAL SHOULD LOOK LIKE

A session proposal must include:

1. A session title.
2. A short description of the topic, including a description of the types of papers that you expect to receive-(max 300 words). The session content should reflect links to the conference topic and to the themes and should be oriented on one or more research questions.
3. Full contact details of the session chair(s) (with a maximum of two chairs per session): Name(s), affiliation, postal address, phone number (will not be made public), e-mail.

WHERE AND WHEN TO SUBMIT

Please send submissions to the following e-mail address: streams@rc21.org within **March 15th, 2013**.

The local organising team will send out information about the acceptance of proposals no later than **April 7th 2013**. The call for papers will be launched by ISA.

INFORMATION

The ISA website on the world congress:
<http://www.isa-sociology.org/congress2014/>

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